

CHURCHILL'S “NEW ORDER” IN GREECE

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E.L.A.S. men present arms to the spiritual leader of E.A.M.
the Metropolitan of Kozani.

PRICE 3D.

THE TRAGEDY OF GREECE

From whichever angle one looks at the unfolding of the Greek drama one cannot fail to realise that this war, as far as Britain is concerned, has moved a long way from the high ideals of 1940-42. No more ideology! No more calls to subject peoples! No more cries for the punishment of Quislings. But instead the sordid manœuvres over balance of power and imperialism involving the support of unrepresentative reactionary elements in the name of legitimacy.

Today, British troops that only a few weeks ago landed on the shores of a self-liberated Greece and were greeted with friendly acclamations, are shooting down the Greeks. The so-called liberators have turned into oppressors. The British soldier cannot be blamed. His is a thankless task; he has to obey orders and carry out instructions. But surely he must question the fact that he is being called upon to-day to shed the blood of the very same people who had only recently given him such warm welcome. He must ask why? What has gone wrong? What is the cause of this trouble? To him, as well as to the average British person, the whole thing is incomprehensible. Why, some people ask, should our soldiers fight and die in Greece and for what?

Every honest man and woman in the country, and indeed throughout the world, must ask that question. What is behind the British action and what is its purpose?

To the man in the street the trouble started suddenly in the first week of December. British troops turned upon their erstwhile allies and the shooting began. And the excuse? That the British armed forces intervened to save Greece from bloodshed and anarchy. **BRITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY.**

The developments in Greece can be laid definitely upon Britain, and even upon one man—Churchill. This might sound extravagant to the uninformed, but anyone who cares to read carefully the Premier's speech in the House of Commons on December 7th, 1944, will find the answer. With what relish Mr. Churchill came down upon the Greek patriots. With what Gibbonsian terms he assailed verbally the people whom his troops are assailing with arms.

In unmistakeable terms he said that he is out to impose his will upon Greece. He treated the House with a dissertation of venomous invective against an allied people. Never did Parliament listen to a greater farrago of untruth, mistatement, distortion and such splenetic outbursts of impotent fury. He did not explain the reasons for his actions, neither did he reveal his aims. He only imposed his will upon the House of Commons and showered cold comfort on the Greeks and all other Allied peoples.

But before we proceed to nail down Churchill's responsibility in the Greek affairs, it is necessary to say a few words about British policy in the Mediterranean and deal shortly with contemporary developments in Greece. Without so doing, it will be difficult for the average reader to make his way through the tangled undergrowth of falsehoods and distortions that are uttered publicly or printed in the press.

For years now the British Foreign Office has been viewing the Ankara—Athens line as paramount to British Mediterranean security. This is the crystallisation of the former loose Balkan and Middle East policy of the 19th century. Turkey was the first to sign an alliance with Britain in this war—an alliance which has remained inoperative. As soon as Greece went to war against Italy in October 1940, Britain occupied Crete. It was an essential base. Now that British reactionary policy looks with certain misgivings at the rising popular movements in the Balkans, she wants to establish herself firmly in Greece, cost what may, to safeguard her supposedly threatened imperial interests. But assuming those interests were threatened, would they be defended better by a dictatorially governed Greece—a dictatorship based on British power—than by a democratic, friendly and allied Greece? It is a point on which the British Government ought to have pondered.

In order to secure Greece as a "base" British policy has married itself to Greek reaction. It feels that in that way British interests are safeguarded, and it is prepared to strangle democracy in Greece.

The story begins nine years ago. Then General Kondylis, after a coup d'état, conducted a plebiscite for the return of the exiled King George II. The plebiscite was faked. Soldiers were marched from booth to booth recording their votes and the amount of votes cast for the return of the King far exceeded the total of the Greek electorate. The plebiscite was so transparently dishonest that the King himself did not accept the results as a true expression of opinion and was unwilling to return without further guarantees. The Foreign Office stepped in. It sent an emissary to Paris to persuade the then-exiled Liberal leader Venizelos to accept the restoration of the King, stating that the King upon his return would guarantee to uphold the Constitution and not tamper with the liberty of the subject. Only when the most solemn pledges were given by the King, was Venizelos and the Liberals persuaded to accept him.

What happened? Eight months after his return the King abolished the Constitution and put Metaxas as dictator. For the next four years, the Greek people lived under a regime of fascist terror not very different from those of Hitler and Mussolini.

Political parties, trade unions etc. were dissolved, the press was tied and the concentration camps became full of people. (Goebbels on a visit to Athens congratulated Metaxas on his new order !) The King and Metaxas tied up Greece economically to Germany. Greece became a hotbed of Nazi intrigue and activity. So much so, that the "Daily Telegraph" published an article early in 1939 in which it charged the Greek King with everything, including the charge that he let down his British friends who helped him to return to the throne.

Then came 1940 and the Italian attack. The Greek resistance, the Greek victories in Albania, have become epic. Churchill was then very vociferous in his praise of Greece. Those were dark days and Churchill temporarily put his imperialism in storage. But what perhaps is not so well known is the fact that many a Greek fascist officer who wanted to capitulate to the Italians, died at the hands of his men, and that those men fought on heroically and for six grim months held the Axis at bay.

Early in 1941 Hitler was massing troops in Bulgaria to attack Greece. The Greek King's position and attitude were not clear. Anthony Eden and General Sir John Dill visited Athens in March 1941 urging the King to resist and promising military assistance. It is said that the King promised to resist the Germans if the British Government would give a guarantee that his rights to the throne would not be jeopardised if he had to flee from Greece in the event of the country being overrun by the Germans. That guarantee was given, and that was the beginning of the conspiracy against the liberty of Greece.

Greece and then Crete were overrun by the Germans. The King evacuated to Egypt with the Banker Tsouderos as his Premier. From there he came to London where he remained until 1943. Meanwhile Greece was feeling the heavy hand of the victorious Nazis. Many of the King's and Metaxas' supporters went over to the Germans. Many of the Royalist officers became the tools of the Nazis. But there was a section of the public which did not collaborate. They were the workers, the trade unionists, all those who had suffered under Metaxas. No sooner was the country conquered when resistance raised its defiant head. German and Italian soldiers were being attacked in the dark ; ships were blown up in the harbours, railways derailed, and headquarters attacked. Resistance was answered with German terror. Uprisings were answered with German imposed hunger. In spite of Mr. Churchill's sneer that German domination was feeble, the three-quarters of a million Greek dead through war, German executions, guerrilla fighting and hunger, is an eloquent testimony to the contrary.

Possibly no country in Europe suffered proportionately more casualties in this war than Greece.

The struggle against the German power was not easy. It was an uphill struggle. The Metaxas dictatorship and the German conquest left a trail of havoc behind them, in houses and communications, in men and organisations. But gradually and painfully the different sections of the resistance movements were coming together, and by arming themselves with weapons taken from the dead enemy, or hidden away by the people, gradually began to form the nucleus of armed units operating both in the towns and the mountains.

Early in 1942, E.A.M. (The National Liberation Front) was formed by an agreement of practically all political parties, uniting under one central authority. The parties that formed the National Front were the Liberals, the Agrarians, the Socialists, the Communists and the Populists. Every true patriot fighting for liberty came within this sacred National Union. Such unity was something entirely new in the history of Greece. Under the impact of defeat and the sufferings of foreign occupation, all the parties of the nation pooled their strength to fight the enemy. Not only civilians but also the clergy, including eight bishops, became members of E.A.M. Thus E.A.M. represented, and represents, a cross-section of the whole Greek people. It is these people that the British Prime Minister, with deliberate disregard for truth, brands as a dictatorially minded "minority." It is these people who Churchill calls with such unparliamentary delicacy bandits and ruffians.

E.L.A.S. (National Peoples' Liberation Army) was established as the military unit of E.A.M. as Tito's army in Yugoslavia is the military organ of the Yugoslav anti-Fascist Council. E.L.A.S. then began its systematic guerrilla war against the Axis invaders. The enemy was then faced with a determined peoples' revolt, and the draconian brutal measures of the Nazis to suppress it are an indication of the strength of that revolt. Liaison was shortly afterwards established with G.H.Q. Cairo and so highly was the work of the E.L.A.S. guerrillas valued that Churchill himself sent them his congratulations over the B.B.C. through Brigadier Eddy (the pseudonym of the British Liaison Officer with E.L.A.S.). E.L.A.S. offered an invaluable contribution to the allied cause in North Africa by interrupting Rommel's supply lines through Greece, an action that drew the warm praise of General, now Field Marshal Montgomery.

E.A.M.'s programme was (a) the liberation of Greece, (b) progressive social legislation and (c) that the King should not return to Greece until after the people could decide upon the question of the Monarchy in a free plebiscite. This latter demand was interpreted in London as showing E.A.M. to be definitely anti-dynastic. Consequently, a

cool attitude, almost one of hostility, was taken up against it. But did the British lovers of the Greek monarchy expect the Greek people to shed their blood in fighting the Germans in order to put on the throne a King with dictatorial tendencies, without even allowing themselves the luxury of voting about it ? Then what is the war about ? Just the substitution of one tyranny by another ?

But Winston Churchill, not troubled by such theoretical abstractions, took his stand by the Greek King. He turned himself into the protector of the Greek Monarchy, and by the middle of 1943, he became an outspoken enemy of E.A.M. From Quebec in the summer of 1943 he sent (according to Pertinax) a telegram to the Greek King in Cairo, pledging his support. Since then the two have taken up definite attitudes towards the Greek people. By every means E.A.M. was discredited, attacked, pilloried. British enterprise, money and arms then brought into being E.D.E.S. under Colonel Napoleon Zervas as a rival guerrilla organisation to E.A.M. Zervas, royalist officer and adventurer, has been connected with several coup d'etats during the period of the Republic. Arms were given to him lavishly by Britain with which he attacked E.A.M. Anthony Eden stated in the House of Commons that he was going to support "that man." Supplies to E.A.M. dwindled considerably and eventually stopped. But Zervas, in spite of British backing, never succeeded in enlarging his force and remained up to the end the leader of a small guerrilla band in the fastnesses of the Pindus mountains. This Greek Michailovitch used British arms to fight the E.A.M. troops and thus indirectly did the work of the Germans. But for British propaganda his activities were invaluable. The guerrillas were fighting amongst themselves ; E.A.M. and E.D.E.S. were rival fratricidal bands and E.A.M. were the culprits. Thus Churchill alluded to the question in the House of Commons in a speech in February 1944. Not in so many words but the import was unmistakable. Grasping this opportunity of division, and feeling that they had supporters in their fight against E.A.M., the Germans organised Greek so-called Security Battalions, armed and officered by Germans, to fight against the patriots. The Quisling security troops and Zervas' troops on many occasions were simultaneously attacking E.A.M. together, but whether as a result of agreement or simply because of coincidence cannot be said for certain. E.A.M. retaliated and would have finished off Zervas' bands had it not been for their reluctance to have a rift with Britain who was supporting Zervas. Thus British policy in Greece ranged itself, perhaps unconsciously, on the side of the Quislings. Now Mr. Churchill comes out as an open supporter of the Security Battalions and the other Quislings because of his savage hatred of the Greek people's democracy. As

an indication of that here is an extract from a Greek booklet relating to British military activities in the Island of Samos in the autumn of 1943.

"On the 13th September, 1943, the English Lieut.-General Arnold the Military Attaché to the British Embassy in Ankara arrived in Samos and took over the military government. Without losing any time he intervened in the domestic affairs of the local Greek Government. He stated that according to the agreements of the Allied Nations it was determined that within a radius of 50 miles from the line of military operations the civil authority rests with the military Governor and as Samos was a war front the civil authority of the island must rest with himself and not with E.A.M. He then proceeded to appoint a temporary committee to conduct affairs which consisted of three members of the E.A.M. Committee of Samos, i.e., the Metropolitan of Samos as Chairman, two other members of E.A.M. and another citizen. Once Lieut.-General Arnold had assured himself that conditions in the island were secure, he brought in British military units which were welcomed by the population, and the guerrillas who went down to the beaches to demonstrate their friendship. Shortly after, a British Battalion arrived and General Arnold left Samos and the military government of the island was taken over by the Commander of the battalion.

EFFORTS TO DISSOLVE E.A.M.—E.L.A.S.

"The behaviour of the British towards E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. and the people of Samos changed every week. It made one wonder whether these changes were on the initiative of individuals or at the behest of the Foreign Office. Let us leave the facts to speak for themselves. The people of Samos had many demonstrations to ask for arms in order to secure their lives and their liberty from the Italian fascists who, for unknown reasons the British did not disarm, and against the very real danger of a German invasion. On the 18th September a motor launch loaded with arms arrived in Samos. The arms were kept for safety in the Italian stores, at a time when the British force in the island consisted of only 50 commandos. E.L.A.S. was three companies strong and armed with primitive weapons, while the Italians were 10,000 strong. The leaders of E.L.A.S. tried to get hold of the arms by force because the British Commander, in spite of the critical situation, insisted on handing the arms over to the Italians. Then Lieut.-General Arnold intervened and a first class row ensued. Lieut.-General Arnold said very excitedly, 'you either obey my orders or I shall order the ship to leave with the arms.' They answered thus: 'The soil you have the honour to

stand on was freed with the blood and sacrifices of our people. We welcomed you as friends and allies, but we see that you came as allies of our executioners and instead of giving us the arms, you hand them over to the Italians. Our place is not here but on the mountain, and there you force us to go.' Following upon this, the Lieut.-General sent his aide de camp to the Metropolitan's house, to offer his apologies, and he promised that he would telegraph to the General Staff in the Middle East for permission to hand over the arms to E.L.A.S. But the arms were not handed over to E.L.A.S. until October when the Germans invaded Kos and the danger of an attack against Samos and Leros became very acute. . . . [When the island was invaded by the Germans, part of E.L.A.S. forces were evacuated with the rest to the Middle East and there they were placed behind barbed wire.]

By the middle of 1944 more than half of Greece was liberated by E.A.M. from the hated enemy and administered by E.A.M. But in spite of the fact that E.A.M. represented the fighting Greek people—indeed E.A.M. was and is Greece—the emigre Greek Government of Cairo steadfastly refused to have its representatives in the Government. It required the revolt of the entire Greek army and Navy in the Middle East in the spring of 1944 to make King George II, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Leeper realise that they went too far in their resistance to the demands of the people. A Government of National Unity was now imperative if Britain was not to be dragged into premature "rupture with the Greeks."

What followed is recent history. M. Papandreu was brought from Athens where he lived under the Germans without even raising so much as a murmur against them, to Egypt and made Prime Minister. This person, according to Mr. Churchill, is the head of a Constitutional Government. Whom does he represent? Not the Greek people, but the wishes of the Greek King and of the British Foreign Office. After prolonged negotiations, E.A.M. agreed to take part in the Papandreu Government, i.e., agreed to the establishment of a provisional Government of National Unity pending the complete liberation of Greece and a new general election.

The advance of the Red Army through Yugoslavia compelled the Germans to withdraw from Greece. E.A.M., which fought many an action with German rearguards, proceeded to liberate the whole country. Shortly afterwards, British troops landed in Greece and the Papandreu Government returned to Athens.

THE CONSPIRACY THICKENS

E.A.M., at the time of the liberation of the rest of Greece, was the only force standing between Greece and anarchy. It was

functioning in many parts of Greece as the Government pending the re-establishment of civil authority. We must add here that in the liberated parts of Greece prior to the final expulsion of the enemy, all administrative posts were filled by persons elected directly by the people through universal adult suffrage.

This is how the "Times" correspondent describes the conditions as late as December 3rd 1944 in reference to Salonika and its hinterland.

"General Bakirjis's (E.A.M.-E.L.A.S.) force seems to be doing admirable work in co-operating with British forces and maintaining order. His organisation is the only possible link with adjacent villages and is the only means by which Britain relief supplies can be got to them and by which relief work can be carried out in Salonika. In short, E.L.A.S. has taken the place of the ordinary Government administration as the Government's official representatives, the Governor, General Avramides, and the Governor of Macedonia, M. Modis, have neither the power nor the staff. A grave danger lies in the repeated efforts that are being made in Athens to inflame opinion, and especially British opinion, into action to force E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. to hand over Salonika to something which does not really exist—i.e., a Greek Government outside Athens. That such attempts are being made can be gathered from the fact that several Athenian newspapers have published stories of a battle between E.L.A.S. and British troops who had been sent to reinforce units already there. These stories are utterly devoid of foundation; there have been no incidents in which British troops were concerned. On the contrary British Officers welcome the assistance of E.L.A.S. in relief work and for maintaining order. The richer sections of the population exist in a state of terror for which there seems to be no real justification."

But this strength and democracy of E.A.M. was not to the liking of the British Government. Mr. Churchill said as much in the House of Commons—that he was determined not to allow E.A.M., i.e., the United Parties of Greece to assume control. And he was prepared to do that in the name of democracy. One of the first acts of the Papandreu Government was the decision to disband the resistance forces. E.A.M. agreed that both E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. should be dissolved and a National Army set up by calling to the colours several age groups. But meanwhile the British authorities brought to Greece from Italy the Greek Sacred Battalion and Mountain Brigade recruited from among royalist elements in Egypt. In the plans of Mr. Churchill these troops would have formed the core of a Praetorean Guard. This put a new complexion on the whole affair. E.A.M. demanded that these bodies should be likewise disbanded, but General Scobie and Mr. Leeper objected. Then a further proposition by E.A.M. that E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. should be allowed

to retain sufficient men under arms in proportion to their strength was agreed upon by the Government. Meanwhile General Scobie, who evidently saw that the game was up, issued a proclamation attacking E.A.M. in which he said inter alia that, "in many parts of the country there is no freedom of speech, no freedom of the press and terrorism and victimisation still exist." Needless to say, the purpose of this proclamation was provocative and insulting. It accused one Party in the Government of acts which, if one remembers the above quotation from the "Times," were his own imaginings. The blatant, arrogant intervention of a British General, made with the full support and approval of the British Government, or more accurately of Mr. Churchill, precipitated the crises. E.A.M. ministers resigned. No minister of honour could remain in the Government after being insulted with such brazen arrogance by a foreign interventionist. Two days later the Athens police force which served the Germans faithfully for three years, opened fire upon an unarmed demonstration, killing and wounding dozens of people, while the British soldiers stood by as passive spectators. The challenge was thrown down. The fascist police and the other fascist gangs that now so conveniently lent their support to the British military authorities, were out to crush the resistance. On the following day E.L.A.S. went to the attack against the fascists. General Scobie now intervened, not to punish the culprits but to attack E.L.A.S. Papandreu was forbidden to resign and has remained in power as a British puppet. The conspiracy succeeded. Churchill is at last happy that he is given the opportunity to show his prowess against the Greeks. His declarations can be taken as meaning that he is actually at war with Greece. So far E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. have not called upon the people to fight the British forces. Let us make no mistake about it. Churchill is fighting a war of intervention, a war of conquest. The Greeks see it as a war of National Liberation. If E.L.A.S. decides to carry on the struggle, it will involve Britain in a protracted guerrilla war that will not pay. And in the end should British policy succeed, it will result in a tyrannic dictatorship being imposed on the Greek people, supported by British armed forces. Is that what Mr. Churchill is after? Does he want to see the fair name of Britain execrated and himself arraigned by the side of Hitler and Mussolini as a would-be Ceasar imposing, or attempting to impose the New Order in Greece.

It is up to the British people to put an end to this infamy, to demand that an Allied Commission be sent to Greece to undertake the task of reconciliation and supervised free and unhampered elections. An Anglo-Russian-American Commission will command respect. British unilateral action and high-handed methods have failed miserably and an end must be put to British intervention.

FACTS ABOUT GREECE

POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

1. **E.A.M.** *E.A.M. stand for National Liberation Front, the Greek Resistance Movement, which came into being in 1942. Its membership is 1,500,000. It is made up of all democratic and progressive elements inside Greece. The actual political organisations in it are the Progressive Liberals, the Socialists, the Agrarians, the Communists, and the General Confederation of Trade Unions. It must be borne in mind however, that it is a movement rather than a front made up of already existing political parties. In February, 1944, E.A.M. organised elections throughout occupied and unoccupied Greece at which nearly 1,800,000 people elected representatives to the National Assembly, which was meeting on the mountains as a Parliament. E.A.M. has the support of 90% of the Greek people. The programme of E.A.M. is to liberate Greece and ensure an independent, popular, democratic Greek Republic.*
2. **LIBERAL PARTY.** *The Liberal Party is known as the Venizelos Party in Greece. Prior to 1936 it was the party with the biggest following. Since then it has split and a big proportion of it went over to E.A.M., whilst a few formed the right-wing political set-up under Mr. Sophoulis.*
3. **POPULAR PARTY.** *Prior to the Metaxas dictatorship, it was the second strongest political party in Greece, at which time it was not the Royalist party. Since then it has split and elements from this party have gone completely Royalist, whilst others joined with the Liberals and the E.A.M.*
4. **K.K.E.** *The Communist Party of Greece was founded 26 years ago, had 17 M.P.s under the Democratic Regime and as such was the third strongest political Party inside the Greek Parliament (1935). Its General Secretary, Zachariades, has been in jail since 1936, when the Fascist dictatorship of General Metaxas was set up. He was in jail in Corfu and was handed over to the Germans when Greece collapsed. All that is known of him is that he has been transferred to Vienna. Siantos is the acting General Secretary.*

MILITARY FRAMEWORK

1. E.L.A.S., which stands for National People's Liberation Army, was organised by E.A.M. This army was organised on the same basis as the old democratic Greek Army. Scores of higher officers of the Greek Army were in charge of the training and direction of the E.L.A.S. Eight generals of the old Regular Army became generals of the E.L.A.S. It numbers 150,000 men and this has probably increased since the liberation. Only 20% of E.L.A.S. are Communists. E.L.A.S. is the only Greek military force that resisted the invaders for three years, tying down some ten German divisions and finally liberating Athens, Salonta and the other big towns.
2. E.D.E.S. are the bands organised by Colonel Zervas, a Royalist officer. It numbers 2,500 men. During the occupation they have co-operated with the Security Battalions in fighting the E.L.A.S. forces.
3. SECURITY BATTALIONS. These are the Quisling formations organised by the Germans and the Quisling Government during the occupation, to fight the E.L.A.S.
4. THE SECRET BATTALION is a military formation organised in Egypt and based exclusively on ex-army officers with Royalist sympathies.
5. THE MOUNTAIN BRIGADE has also been organised in Egypt after the democratic armed forces stationed there were interned. This force too is composed of Royalist and pro-fascist elements. Its commander, Tsakalotos, actually served under the Germans in the Athens quisling Government.
6. THE ATHENS POLICE. This police is the same as that organised by Fascist General Metaxas and the quisling Government under German occupation. It is completely fascist.